

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 1
Columbia River Joint State Hearing
December 11, 2013

Fisheries under consideration:	Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon
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- Under permanent rule, Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries open for retention effective January 1. The fisheries typically remain open until the annual harvest guideline for each pool is met. Since 2011, the Bonneville Pool fishery has been managed to provide retention opportunity during winter and summer seasons.
- In 2013, the fishery in The Dalles Pool closed to retention on November 12 and the fishery in John Day Pool closed to retention on June 29.
- In 2013, the fishery in Bonneville Pool was open to retention from January 1 through February 10 and June 14-15 and June 21.
- The white sturgeon population in Bonneville Pool was assessed in 2012. Legal-size abundance (14,200 fish) was about half of the previous estimate done in 2009, but was projected to increase 3.6% by 2014. Based on this assessment, the recreational fishery harvest guideline was reduced from 2,000 fish to 1,100 fish for 2013.
- The white sturgeon population in John Day Pool was assessed during the summer of 2013. Results of this assessment will be reviewed by the Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF) in January 2014.
- The SMTF will discuss and develop management recommendations for 2014 Zone 6 white sturgeon fisheries, including potential modifications to harvest guidelines based on updated population assessments.
- In the interim, the 2013 recreational fishery harvest guidelines remain in effect:

Interim 2014 Zone 6 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest Guidelines		
Bonneville Pool	The Dalles Pool	John Day Pool
1,100	300	500

- Support for maintaining a split season approach and 7-day per week winter fishing in Bonneville Pool was reaffirmed at a recent (11/26) public meeting in The Dalles. Therefore, staff has modeled a season which attempts to share the harvest guideline between the winter and summer seasons, and at the same time provide meaningful opportunity during each season.
- Weekly harvest the past four years in Bonneville Pool has ranged widely from 0.3 – 84.1 fish/day during January and averaged 18.6 fish a day.
- Staff anticipates an increase in angling pressure for sturgeon in Bonneville Pool due to the January 1, 2014 scheduled closure of retention fisheries below Bonneville Dam. The

magnitude of this potential effort shift is uncertain and difficult to predict. Staff modeled a conservative 30% increase in average daily harvest to 24 fish/day, to account for an effort shift and the modest increase in projected abundance.

- A 24 fish/day catch rate would produce a catch of about 575 fish by Friday, January 24; or 52% of the annual guideline.
- Considering public support for a split season in Bonneville Pool, and harvest expectations based on similar season structures, staff is proposing the following winter season for Bonneville Pool:

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2014 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery</i>	
Season:	Wednesday January 1 through Friday January 24, 2014
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam, including adjacent tributaries.
Allowable Catch:	White sturgeon between 38-inches and 54-inches fork length.
Expected Harvest	575 white sturgeon

- In order to achieve a split season, staff's intent is to manage the winter season for a harvest of approximately 550-600 fish or a January 24 end date, whichever comes first.
- Staff will monitor the fishery as it progresses and provide updates as needed.
- Any changes to the current Bonneville Pool harvest guideline from the SMTF will be reflected in the summer season structure. Staff does not anticipate a change to the guideline.
- Staff anticipates re-opening Bonneville Pool for a summer retention season during June 2014 if sufficient quota remains available. This summer fishery and a May-July spawning sanctuary downstream of The Dalles Dam will likely be proposed in March or April of 2014.
- Staff is not recommending any changes for fisheries in The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool at this time.

Future Meetings

- Staff is not proposing any hearings at this time.

The Winter Compact Hearing is tentatively scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday January 29, location to be determined. The purpose of this hearing is to review salmon and steelhead stock status and consider non-Indian commercial and recreational fishing seasons in the Columbia River and Select Areas, including:

- 2014 recreational spring salmon fisheries.
- 2014 Select Area winter-summer commercial fisheries.
- 2014 non-Indian commercial winter/spring commercial salmon fishing plan.